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Tuesday
April 25, 2023
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Page 8

Speaker McCarthy faces big test as debt bill heads for vote

By LISA MASCARO
AP Congressional Correspondent
WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Kevin McCarthy is hurtling toward one of the most consequential weeks of the new House Republican majority as he labors to pass a partisan package that would raise the nation's debt limit by \$1.5 trillion in exchange for steep cuts that some in his own party oppose. McCarthy has almost no room for error with his slim five-seat majority hold on power in the House. He has scoffed at the drama bearing down on him, mocking public interest at the will-he-or-won't-he anticipation of the embattled Republican speaker's ability to bring his fellow Republicans in line. But the political stakes are sky-high for McCarthy, who is trying to entice President Joe Biden to the negotiating table.



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., speaks at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, April 20, 2023.

Associated Press

Continued on Page 2

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Speaker McCarthy faces big test as debt bill heads for vote

Continued from Front

The nation is teetering toward a debt default crisis, needing to lift the borrowing cap to keep fully paying the bills in a matter of weeks.

"We're going to vote on this — this week — and we're gonna pass this bill," the Republican Whip Tom Emmer told The Associated Press in an interview Monday.

Even if McCarthy can muscle the measure to passage this week, it has almost no chance of becoming law. Biden and his top congressional allies, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, say they are unwilling to negotiate over the debt ceiling. The House Republican package is essentially dead on arrival in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

At the White House, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the legislative package from the Republicans is "cruel," and would hit Americans with steep and painful program cuts. Still, McCarthy is trying to force Democrats to bargain, hoping that muscling his own party's proposal to passage will be an opening bid that Biden will be



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., holds an event to mark 100 days of the Republican majority in the House, at the Capitol in Washington, Monday, April 17, 2023.

Associated Press

forced to respond to with his own offer. Biden has derided the Republicans' "wacko" ideas, but even some Democrats, including Sen Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., say it's time to negotiate. But first, the Republican speaker faces the enormous task of passing the package, uniting what his team refers to as the "five families" — the often warring factions of conservatives and far-right Republicans that make up the House GOP majority. "We will hold a vote this

week, and we will pass it," McCarthy vowed in a Sunday interview on Fox News. The hard-right House Freedom Caucus has yet to bless McCarthy's proposal — though key conservatives who have bucked the speaker, including Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., have spoken favorably of it. Having gained much of what he wanted, Gaetz said he is still trying to bolster the new work requirements for those receiving some government aid. Yet other conservatives are

also unsure they can support the deal, particularly the loss of new tax credits for renewable energy production that would be rolled back. One person familiar with the situation said repealing the green energy tax breaks was not part of the initial plan, but was added after some members of the Freedom Caucus insisted it be included. The GOP whip team under Emmer, R-Minn., is heavily counting the votes. With the House not returning to work until late Tuesday eve-

ning, the floor action is not expected until Wednesday at the earliest.

Emmer said lawmakers are still vying to tack on their own priorities, but the speaker's office has made it clear that the bill, as it now stands, is closed — meaning no more changes.

Republican lawmakers, Emmer said, need to go through "whatever stages of euphoria and grief they have to go through," before it's time for the roll call. "Your choice is you vote for this to move this forward and do what's in the best interest of the country or you give Joe Biden and Chuck Schumer a blank check," Emmer said, making his pitch to the holdouts. He noted about his job rounding up the votes: "Be careful about getting into a wrestling match with a pig in a mud hole, because after a while you might find out the pig is having a good time."

Among them, rolling back federal spending to fiscal 2022 levels and imposing a 1% cap on future spending growth for the next decade. It would impose new work requirements for recipients of government aid and it would rescind Biden's proposal to forgive up to \$20,000 in student loan debt. □



President Joe Biden, accompanied by first lady Jill Biden, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona and Rebecka Peterson, 2023 National Teacher of the Year, right, walks from the Oval Office to attend a ceremony honoring the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2023 Teachers of the Year in the Rose Garden of the White House, Monday, April 24, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By JOSH BOAK and COLLEEN LONG

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden honored the nation's best teachers

Monday, saying they go above and beyond by providing food and supplies out of their own pockets and often find themselves "explaining the unexplain-

Biden says teaching should not be 'life-threatening' job

able, from banned books to duck-and-cover drills."

"Teaching should not be a life-threatening profession," Biden said, referencing deadly school shootings that plague the United States.

"And educators should not need to be armed to feel safe in the classroom."

He spoke at a Rose Garden event that honored the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2023 teachers of the year from each state. Tulsa, Oklahoma, math teacher Rebecka Peterson was named overall teacher of the year. Biden spoke of the chal-

lenges of the modern-day teacher, including gun violence and a growing movement from the right to ban books in classrooms, particularly those that reference gender and sexual identity. Attempted book bans hit an all-time high in 2022.

"I never thought, as a student of history, I'd be a president that's fighting against elected officials banning books," he said. "Empty shelves don't help kids learn very much." He said parents and teachers should stand up against "politicians who try to score political points by banning

books." Bills facilitating the restriction of books have been proposed or passed in Arizona, Iowa, Texas, Missouri and Oklahoma, among other states.

In Florida, where Gov. Ron DeSantis has approved laws to review reading materials and limit classroom discussion of gender identity and race, books pulled indefinitely or temporarily include John Green's "Looking for Alaska," Colleen Hoover's "Hopeless," Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" and Grace Lin's picture story "Dim Sum for Everyone!" □

Vegas-to-California high-speed train gets bipartisan backing

By KEN RITTER

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A bipartisan congressional group from Nevada and California asked the Biden administration Monday to fast-track federal funds for a private company to build a high-speed rail line between Las Vegas and the Los Angeles area.

All six of Nevada's elected federal lawmakers and four House members from California said in a letter to U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg that they're on board with a proposal from Brightline West to spend more than \$10 billion to lay tracks. Trains would whisk passengers generally along the traffic-clogged Interstate 15 corridor.

"This project is a major priority because it will make southern Nevada more accessible to millions of visitors each year," said U.S. Sen. Jacky Rosen, the Nevada Democrat leading the group. "That means more people spending money at our hotels, restaurants, casinos, and small businesses and attending conventions, sports competitions, and world-class special events, which will boost our



A Brightline train is shown at a station in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on Jan. 11, 2018.

Associated Press

economy and create more good-paying jobs." Brightline West is seeking \$3.75 billion in federal funding from the Biden administration-backed federal infrastructure law. The company and the Southern Nevada Building Trades Union announced in recent weeks that union labor will be used during construction. "After more than a decade of working to find

a pathway, Brightline West will be the first true high-speed rail system in America and will serve as the blueprint for how we can connect major city pairs that are too short to fly and too far to drive," said Mike Reininger, CEO of Florida-based Brightline Holdings LLC.

The lawmakers' letter pointed to company projections of 35,000 construction jobs,

1,000 permanent jobs and the diversion of "millions of automobile users from I-15 onto a faster, more efficient, zero-emission transportation option." Amtrak passenger service to Las Vegas ended in 1997 with the demise of a train called the Desert Wind. The concept of building a bullet train through the Mojave Desert dates to at least 2005 under various names.

It has seen starts and stops over the years and became sidetracked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brightline is the only privately owned and operated intercity passenger railroad in the United States. In Florida, Brightline West's sister company began sharing the Florida East Coast freight line between Miami and West Palm Beach in 2014 and is building an extension to Orlando.

High-speed trains running through urban areas have drawn criticism for numerous crashes with vehicles at rail crossings. Investigators found none of the deaths were the railroad's fault, determining that many were suicides or drivers or pedestrians trying to beat the trains.

The Mojave Desert is largely open space, and a Brightline West trip might cut a more than four-hour trip in half. Trains carrying 500 passengers at speeds of nearly 200 mph (322 kph) would connect Las Vegas, Victorville, California, and Rancho Cucamonga — a city in San Bernardino County with a passenger station on a suburban Los Angeles light rail line. □

Susan Rice, Biden's top domestic policy adviser, departing

By COLLEEN LONG

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that his top domestic policy adviser, Susan Rice, will leave her post next month.

As director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, Rice had broad sway on the administration's approach to health care, immigration and racial inequality.

It was a surprising shift for Rice, a longtime Democratic foreign policy expert who served as President Barack Obama's national security adviser and U.N. ambassador, the only person to serve in both positions. She worked closely with then-Vice President Biden in those roles and

was on his short list to become his running mate during the 2020 campaign.

"After more than two years of her steady leadership of the Domestic Policy Council — it's clear: there is no one more capable, and more determined to get important things done for the American people than Susan Rice," Biden said in a statement announcing her departure.

Rice went into the job a flashpoint for Republican attacks dating back to the Obama years. In her wide-ranging tenure at the helm of Biden's domestic agenda, she helped oversee a flurry of executive and legislative action, including on health care, policing, gun safety, racial equity and the massive \$1 trillion infra-

structure bill.

"I am so proud of all we have been able to accomplish together for the American people," Rice said in a tweet, in which she thanked Biden.

Rice, whose last day on the job will be May 26, also was a major player in the Biden administration's efforts to manage surging migrant numbers at the U.S.-Mexico border by turning away many migrants who crossed the border illegally. Instead, the U.S. has agreed to accept thousands of migrants per month as long as they come legally, have eligible sponsors and pass vetting and background checks.

The decisions were seen as a shift to the right by some immigrant advocates who criticized the administra-



Domestic Policy Adviser Susan Rice speaks during a briefing at the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022, on the newly announced student loan forgiveness plan.

Associated Press

tion for moving away from promises to be more humane on immigration policies. The next person named to the job will have a different focus.

With a divided Congress and lower expectations for passing major legislation, the new domestic policy adviser will be working on implementing the policies. □

Silenced Montana trans lawmaker upholds stance in dispute

By **AMY BETH HANSON**
Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Supporters of a transgender lawmaker who legislative leaders in Montana have prevented from speaking gathered outside the statehouse on Monday, waving pride flags chanting "Let Her Speak!" as a stand-off over fiery remarks she made moved into its second week.

Montana state Rep. Zooey Zephyr hasn't been allowed to speak on the statehouse floor since Thursday because she told her Republican colleagues last week that they would have "blood on their hands" if they banned gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth.

Zephyr, a Missoula Democrat, was silenced and deliberately misgendered by some Republican lawmakers throughout last week. Zephyr was silenced for a second day Friday as her Republican colleagues refused to let her speak on the chamber's floor about a bill that would prevent minors from seeing pornography online.

She plans to keep trying to speak on the House floor Monday despite Republican leaders insisting that



Rep. Zooey Zephyr, D-Missoula, second from right, stands with members of the minority party on the house floor on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at the state capitol in Helena, Mont.

Associated Press

won't happen until she apologizes. House Speaker Matt Regier and his Republican colleagues have indicated they have no plans to back down from their stance.

"There are 10,000 Montanans whose voice will not be heard because their representative will not be allowed to speak, and that makes me really sad," said Rep. Connie Keogh, another Missoula Democrat,

as proceedings opened on Monday afternoon.

The standoff is the latest example of emergent discussions around civility, decorum and how to discuss political issues many perceive as life and death. Ban proponents see Zephyr's remarks as unprecedented and personal in nature. She and her supporters say they accurately illustrate the stakes of the legislation under discussion, arguing that

restricting gender-affirming care endangers transgender youth, who many studies suggest suffer disproportionately from depression and suicidality.

Katy Spence, a constituent of Zephyr's who drove to the Capitol from Missoula on Monday, said the standoff was about censoring ideas, not decorum.

"She's been silenced because she spoke the truth about what these anti-trans

bills are doing in Montana -- to trans youth especially," she said of Zephyr.

As proceedings began, Zephyr's supporters filled the statehouse gallery and supplemental Montana Highway Patrol stood by to monitor developments. Zephyr voted on various measures, but leadership pushed discussion of a bill she requested to speak on to the end of the agenda. House Speaker Matt Regier and his Republican colleagues have indicated they have no plans to back down from their stance, meaning the standoff is expected to resume when the Montana House reconvenes Monday afternoon at the Capitol in Helena.

Last year, Zephyr became the first openly transgender woman elected to the Montana Legislature putting her among a record number of transgender lawmakers who began serving across the U.S.

The dispute started last Tuesday when the House was debating Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte's proposed amendments to a measure banning gender-affirming care for minors. Zephyr spoke up in reference to the body's opening prayer. □

1 dead in Oklahoma college shooting, suspect in custody

By **SUE OGROCKI and SEAN MURPHY**

Associated Press

MIDWEST CITY, Okla. (AP) —

A man shot and killed another man Monday at Rose State College in Oklahoma, according to police,

who reported no other injuries after the campus was briefly put on lockdown. Midwest City Police Chief Sid Porter said the men were "acquainted through a domestic situation," but did not elaborate on exactly what their relationship was or what led to the shooting.

He also did not say if either man was a student or staff member at the school. The two-year college has about 13,000 students and is just outside Oklahoma City.

Crime scene tape surrounded the humanities building in the center of campus and officers from multiple law enforcement agencies were on the scene.

Porter said the victim was shot one time and that the suspect was confronted by officers who work on campus.

"They ordered him to drop the gun, which he did, and they took him into custody," Porter said.

Kevin McCormack, a student from the suburb of Choctaw, said he was meeting a friend on campus when he heard gunfire. He said they looked over and saw a man hitting the ground, next to another man holding a gun and a woman who was trying to calm him down.

"Almost immediately, we said, 'Go, go, go!' and took off," McCormack said.

Rose State College can-

celed classes for the remainder of the day after lifting the lockdown order. A person who answered the phone at the university's public safety office Monday referred questions to police.

Porter praised students and staff for how they responded during the lockdown and noted that weeks before the shooting, Rose State College had practiced what to do in the event of an active shooter. "Things got locked down real quick," Porter said. "I just think they did a fantastic job listening to the school and everybody staying down and not panicking because we didn't know what was going on." □



Oklahoma state troopers walk under police tape following a fatal shooting at Rose State College in Midwest City, Okla., on Monday, April 24, 2023.

Associated Press

U.N.: By month's end, India population to be world's largest

By KRUTIKA PATHI and JOE McDONALD

Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India will be the world's most populous country by the end of this month, eclipsing an aging China, the United Nations said Monday. The milestone raises questions about whether India can repeat the economic success that has made China central to the world's economy and a leading global power.

The news comes at a moment when India is promoting itself as a rising international player as the host of this year's G20 Summit. It's also becoming a more attractive destination for multinational companies seeking to reduce their reliance on China.

By the end of April, India's population is expected to reach 1.425 billion, which means it will match and then surpass mainland China's, the U.N.'s Department of Economic and Social Affairs said in a news release. The forecast is based on their latest estimates of global population.

It's not clear exactly when India's population will pass China's. It may have already have done so. Demographers say the limits



Families watch from a bridge as thousands of people enter the holy River Sarayu in Ayodhya, India, Thursday, March 30, 2023.

Associated Press

of population data make it impossible to calculate a date. Another U.N. report last week projected that India would have 2.9 million people more than China by mid-year, but that was based on snapshots of the populations at the beginning of the year and the middle of the year. Monday's announcement is based on an analysis that tried to estimate when the population crossover will take place.

The Indian government, which hasn't done a census since 2011, has not officially commented on the estimates. The timing of when India surpasses China in population will likely be revised once India conducts its next census, John Wilmoth, director of the United Nations' population division, said at a news conference at U.N. headquarters in New York. India and China are neighbors and have a compli-

cated relationship, including robust trade ties and a long-running border dispute. The United States and its allies increasingly see India, the world's largest democracy, as a counterweight to China. But their interests don't always align. India, unlike much of the West, has refrained from condemning its Cold War ally Russia over its war in Ukraine, instead adopting a neutral stance even as India's pur-

chases of Russian crude have soared. Observers say India's sheer size, and its young population, give it the potential to replicate China's economic trajectory. Young workers who flooded into China's cities to take factory jobs starting in the 1990s were an essential ingredient in the boom that saw China become the world's second-largest economy.

But China's population peaked in 2022 and has since started to fall. By the close of the century, its population could drop below 1 billion, the U.N. said. The country's elderly population is swelling while its birth rate is still plunging, from 1.7 babies per woman in 2017 to 1.2 in 2022, according to U.N. data.

By contrast, India has the world's largest young population, a higher fertility rate, and has seen a consistent decrease in infant mortality. Experts caution against alarm about overpopulation, however, as the country's fertility rate has been steadily falling, from over five births per woman in the 1960s, to two in 2022. India's population is expected to stop growing and stabilize around 2064. □

Mob in Haiti capital burns to death 13 suspected gangsters

By EVENS SANON

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— A mob in the Haitian capital beat and burned 13 suspected gang members to death with gasoline-soaked tires Monday after pulling the men from police custody at a traffic stop, police and witnesses said. The horrific violence underlined the increasingly lawless situation in Port-au-Prince where criminal gangs have taken control over an estimated 60% of the city since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Haiti National Police said in a brief statement that officers in the city's Canape Vert section stopped

and searched a minibus for contraband, and had confiscated weapons from suspects before they were "unfortunately lynched by members of the population." The statement did not elaborate on how members of the crowd were able to take control of the suspects.

A witness who gave his name as Edner Samuel told The Associated Press that members of the crowd took the suspected gangsters away from police, beat them and stoned them before putting tires on them, pouring gasoline over them and burning them.

An AP reporter at the scene saw 13 bodies burning in a street. The fires drew hun-

dreds of onlookers in the hilly suburb of the city, many of them shielding their noses from the fumes. Samuel said the suspects were believed to have been heading to another area to join a group of gang members who were battling police. Another witness, Jean Josue, said there had been a lot of shooting in the area since the early morning. The situation in the capital remained tense, and shots could be heard ringing out from several neighborhoods.

Witnesses at the scene said the suspects were believed to have been members of the Kraze Barye gang, which translates to

"Breaking Barriers." Authorities say the group is led by Vitel'Homme Innocent, who is accused of helping

kidnap 17 U.S. missionaries in October 2021 and also is linked to the assassination of Moïse. □



Bystanders gather around the bodies of alleged gang members that were set on fire by a mob after they were stopped by police while traveling in a vehicle in the Canape Vert area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Monday, April 24, 2023.

Associated Press

Amazon Indigenous woman wins Goldman environment prize

By **FABIANO MAISONNAVE**
Associated Press

SÃO PAULO (AP) — When Alessandra Korap was born in the mid-1980s, her Indigenous village nestled in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil was a haven of seclusion. But as she grew up, the nearby city of Itaituba, with its bustling streets and commercial activity, crept closer and closer.

It wasn't just her village feeling the encroachment of non-Indigenous outsiders. Two major federal highways paved the way for tens of thousands of settlers, illegal gold miners and loggers into the region's vast Indigenous territories, which cover a forested area roughly the size of Belgium.

The influx posed a grave threat to Korap's Mundurucu people, 14,000-strong and spread throughout the Tapajos River Basin, in Para and Mato Grosso states. Soon illegal mining, hydroelectric dams, a major railway and river ports for soybean exports choked their lands they were still struggling to have recognized.

Korap and other Mundurucu women took up the



Mundurucu leader Alessandra Korap poses at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, Wednesday, April 19, 2023

responsibility of defending their people, overturning the traditionally all-male leadership. Organizing in their communities, they orchestrated demonstrations, presented compelling evidence of environmental crime to the Federal Attorney General and Federal Police, and vehemently opposed illicit agreements and incentives offered to the Mundurucu by unscrupulous miners, loggers, corporations, and politicians seeking access to their land.

Korap's defense of her ancestral territory was recognized with the Goldman Environmental Prize on Monday. The award honors grassroots activists around the world who are dedicated to protecting the environment and promoting sustainability.

"This award is an opportunity to draw attention to the demarcation of the Sawre Muybu territory," Korap told The Associated Press. "It is our top priority, along with the expulsion of illegal miners."

Sawre Muybu is an area of virgin rainforest along the Tapajos River spanning 178,000 hectares (440,000 acres). Official recognition for the land, or demarca-

tion, began in 2007 but was frozen during the far-right presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, which ended in January.

Still, the Mundurucu people celebrated a victory in 2021 when the British mining company Anglo American gave up trying to mine inside Indigenous territories in Brazil, including Sawre Muybu.

Studies have shown that Indigenous-controlled forests are the best preserved the in Brazilian Amazon.

Almost half of Brazil's climate pollution comes from deforestation. The destruction is so vast now that the eastern Amazon, not far from the Mundurucu, has ceased to be a carbon sink, or net absorber of the gas and is now a carbon source, according to a study published in 2021 in the journal Nature.

Korap, however, knows that land rights alone don't protect the land.

In the neighboring Mundurucu Indigenous Territory, illegal miners have destroyed and contaminated hundreds of miles of waterways in search of gold, even though it was officially recognized in 2004. □

Associated Press

Watchdog: World military spending up to an all-time high

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Global military spending grew for the eighth consecutive year in 2022 to an all-time high of \$2.24 trillion, with a sharp rise in Europe, chiefly due to Russian and Ukrainian expenditure, a Swedish think tank said Monday.

Spending globally increased by 3.7% in real terms, but military expenditure in Europe was up 13% its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said in a report. Military aid to Ukraine and concerns about a heightened threat from Russia "strongly influenced many other states' spending decisions."

The independent Swedish watchdog said that last year, the three largest arms

spenders were the United States, China and Russia, who between them accounted for 56% of global expenditure.

"The rise 'is a sign that we are living in an increasingly

insecure world," said Nan Tian, a researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

Several states significantly increased their military

spending following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while others announced plans to raise spending levels over periods of up to a decade. Some of the sharpest increases were seen in countries near Russia: Finland (36%), Lithuania (27%), Sweden (12%) and Poland (11%).

Both Sweden and Finland jointly applied for NATO membership in May 2022, abandoning decades of nonalignment in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While Finland has been admitted, Sweden's bid to join NATO remains stalled by opposition from Turkey and Hungary.

"While the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 certainly affected military spending decisions in 2022, concerns about Rus-

sian aggression have been building for much longer," said Lorenzo Scarazzato, a researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

"Many former Eastern bloc states have more than doubled their military spending since 2014, the year when Russia annexed Crimea."

Russia also has increased its military spending. SIPRI said that grew by an estimated 9.2% in 2022, to around \$86.4 billion. That is equivalent to 4.1% of Russia's gross domestic product in 2022, up from 3.7% the previous year.

Established in 1966, SIPRI is an international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. □



U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft F-35 performs aerobatic maneuvers on the second day of the Aero India 2023 at Yelahanka air base in Bengaluru, India, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press



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Aruba Monument funds Foundation and the Aruban government to restore Cas Veneranda

(Oranjestad)—For more than seven years, the Aruba Monument Fund (SMFA) had been looking for a partner interest in restoring the building situated at Wilhelmina Street #7. This is a building has a tremendous historical value, and is build with a unique style of architecture, traditional for Aruba. Now SMFA can happily announce to the public that the house building of Cas Veneranda has been acquired and will soon be undergoing restoration.

This is all with the cooperation of the Aruban government, after Minister Geoffrey Wever expressed his interest to house some of his ministerial department in this historic building located in the down town Oranjestad. After much discussion, a mutual agreement has been reached that Cas Veneranda would be the ideal office building for the Department of Economic Affairs (DEACI).

The Agreement

On April 20th, the minister of economy, Mr. Geoffrey Wever, along with the director of SMFA and in the presence of the foundation's board, APFA and representatives

of the Arends Family—owners of the building, the agreement for the purchase, restoration and the renting of the Cas Veneranda building. SMFA can now continue its plan for the restoration.

The Restoration

The next phase includes conducting the necessary investigations on the state of the building, appointing the right architect, designing the project, preparing for the project and finally the actual restoration process. It has been calculated that the restoration will take approximately two years to finish. In the mean time, the community of Aruba can count on a fully-restored Cas Veneranda by 2025. This building will have a space available for a small restaurant/café as to make this monument accessible to the public too, instead of just functioning as a government office.

Protection

Up until now, the monument did not have the necessary protection it needed, which posed a great threat of losing the building to investors who may not care about the historical value behind this

building. The moment that SMFA concludes the purchase of the building, there will e petition made to the Bureau of Monuments for its protection and official recognition as an Aruban monument.

Financing

The project of restoration will be financed by the Dutch National Restoration Fund (NRF) and the Aruba General Pension Fund in the form of a loan with low taxes to SMFA. During a recent visit to Aruba, the NRF visited the location and confirmed their interest to finance this project. In order to make this project possible, Minister Geoffrey Wever made sure to acquire a contribution of 690 thousand florins in the form of a subsidy to buy the building.

History of Cas Veneranda

This impactful building in Wilhelmina Street was constructed in 1936 by Frederico Maximiliaan (Machi) Arends, who was a consul for Spain.

The architect at the time was the renowned Dada Picus, who went all the way to Cartagena, Colombia to find an inspiration from a building that Machi's wife, Maria



Veneranda, was infatuated with. Afterwards he came back to Aruba to build the building we now know as Cas Veneranda. At that time, this was one of the biggest houses built on Aruba, with a Latin American Neo-baroque style.

Apart from being a home, the building was also home to a flower shop, an ice cream parlor and the consulate for Spain. During the 1990s, the building became the Papiamento Restaurant. After the restaurant moved out the building, this was left empty. In 2014, a big fire destroyed a big part of the interior. For safety reasons, this building was later closed down.

In good cooperation with the Arends Family, Minister Wever, SMFA, NRF and APFA, we can preserve Cas Veneranda and his valuable history for future generations. □

The 15th edition of “Arte di Palabra Aruba” poetry competition showcases a new group of talented young artists

(Oranjestad)—On Sunday, April 16th, the 15th edition of the poetry competition “Arte di Palabra Aruba” (AdP) took place at the Cas di Cultura theater house in down town Oranjestad. AdP is organized every year by the Department of Culture Aruba (DCA) and funded by the Papiamento Corrector Foundation (FCP).

During this competition, 29 students from different secondary schools around the island participated with either a poem or a short story. This year was the also



the first time that there has been a “Rap” category, which only had one contestant from EPB high school in the running. Sergio Garcia presented his beautiful original composition titled “Slave to my Freedom.” It should be noted that the participants were al-

lowed to choose the topic of slavery in frame of the commemoration of 160 years since the abolition of slavery throughout the Dutch Kingdom this coming June. Before the competition, participants were given three work shop sessions taught by John Fred-

dy Montoya, so they could work on their presentation, articulation, expression and voice dominance on stage.

Secondary schools that were represented during the competition are as follows: Abraham de Veer School, Ceque College, San Antonio College, Colegio Nigel Matthew, Colegio San Augustin, EPI, EPB San Nicolas and John Wesley College. After the competition, the audience was able to enjoy a dance performance by No Image Dance Group, who are the

latest winner of the Gang di Arte 2022 competition, another multidisciplinary project for young people organized by DCA.

After the dance performance, members of the judge panel turned in their decision and MC Rafael Garcia—winner of AdP Aruba multiple times—announced the runner-ups and winner.

This coming July 14th, winners of AdP will be representing Aruba in the interislander competition of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao (ABC). □

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Announcement of Open Day at Aruba's Marine Barracks in Savaneta

The Marine Barracks in Savaneta will once again open their doors for the public on May 1st 2023. After four years there was no

possibility for an Open Day; finally it has come so far again. Everybody is most welcome to have a look from 10:00 o'clock till 16:00

o'clock at the Royal Navy.

Also our Security Partners, such as the Coastguard Dutch Caribbean Region,



Police Force Aruba, Fire Department and the Department for Disaster Relief (Bureau Rampenbestrijding) Aruba, will be present during the whole day.

During the Open Day there you can see several demonstrations from the Royal Navy, as well as from the Security Partners. Visitors can grab a bite to eat at the food courts and browse the various market stalls. There is also a Superlottery with great prizes. Proceeds from the tickets sold will go

to two charities: "Trampoline pa Trabao" & the Foundation "Stichting Muchila Creative". Radio stations CoolFM & FreshFM will provide for live music on site during the Open Day.

Follow the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Opendagmarinierskazerne> to be abreast of the news around the Open Day. Register for the event on Facebook [<https://fb.me/e/4IU0Dh9Em>] and receive the latest news immediately. ☐

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Visual Voices 2023 Photography Exhibition at San Nicolas



(Oranjestad)—Visual Voices Photography is a project that originated in the afterschool program known as Y's CARE of the YMCA of Aruba. This project started in 2019 at the YMCA in San Nicolas, but, unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had been put on hold for two years. Thankfully, the project was reactivated last year by the enthusiastic efforts of the Y's CARE Supervisor, Ms. Inki Geerman.

For 2023, Visual Voices Photography will host the youth again, a group between the ages of ten through eleven years are coming with a state of art exhibition of how they see the world through the lens of their camera.

A total of twenty-four photographs are chosen to be displayed in the exhibition, which will be held in the ArtisA Gallery in San Nicolas.

Each piece showcases the participants' exploration of their community through the viewfinder, this under the direction of renown Canadian photographer, Randy Bullerwell.

The students learned the technical aspects of photography as they developed their own perspective and creative style.

The exhibition will be showcased In ArtisA Gallery in the Promenade San Nicolas, Saturday 29th of April, from 07:00 pm – 09:00 pm. Come and join us in to the magical world of these youngsters, showing the images of this talented group of students as they share their inspiration behind the images they have captured!

And once again, much like every year, a warm thank you to Tito Bolivar and the ArtisA Team for making this expo happen and hosting our group. □



Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out to **Courtney, Liv and Gabby**. They said they have been here before and they love the warm weather. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

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National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which con-



tains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by

several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is an adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The

Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in or-

der to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □

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Heart-Centered Leadership Foundation helps young adults make their dreams come true

(Oranjestad)—The Heart-Centered Leadership Foundation (HCLF) promotes opportunities for young adults between 18 and 29 years old to start a training journey as a volunteer, where they form part of the foundation during its activities for teenagers of 13 to 17 years of age.

These volunteers that do brave work with HCLF are called Heart-Centered Impact

Coaches (HCIC) and they contribute in the organization's goal to empower and inspire young people. A HCIC is able to communicate, motivate and provide support for young people on a social and academic level during workshops, seminars and other HCLF activities. This opportunity allows young adults to form connections and make a positive impact in someone's life. Personal and professional development is crucial for a young adult to get to know their skills and purpose that will further guide them in the future.

Meet fellow HCLF volunteer, Alyeska Lake, better known by her nickname "Aly". She is a 26-year-old young woman raised in San Nicolas, and who now lives in The Netherlands, where she just completed her Masters in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychologist at Leiden University. Alyeska shared her experience as a Heart-Centered Impact Coach, which helped her become the version of herself she always dreamed of.

How was your experience as a volunteer at HCLF?

"I always enjoyed my time with HCLF and I have no regrets. My favorite memory at HCLF is the sense of belonging I got and the family that I made from the moment

I started doing voluntary work. I connected deeply with other volunteers and members of staff during various activities and social moments that are designed for the development of both volunteers and staff. I always felt proud after talking to the teens during school activities. A moment that stood out for me was when I assisted as a group leader during the Impact Cafés at John Wesley High school, Filomena College Mavo and Abraham de Veer High school. This was when we discussed the topic of mental health. The sessions were very interactive and the teens could feel comfortable to share their thoughts on the matter and other related points about mental health.

How did volunteering at HCLF impact your personal and professional life?

"I discovered that I had more skills than I initially thought. With the support from HCLF, I had the opportunity to develop more skills and talents, and also put these in practice."

"I see myself as a dreamer with big ambitions. To be able to have the skills to visualize these dreams is one of my biggest goals, and this is thanks to HCLF. Getting to know myself better really helped my mentality and the direction that I want to go in life—personally and professionally. I know exactly who I am, who I want to be, where I want to go, what I want to do and with whom. I believe I already had this in me, but it was through the challenges that HCLF gave me that I was able to realize my full potential and take action."

What is the most valuable part of volunteering at HCLF?



"The most valuable part is that HCLF recognizes you for who you are, not for what you show them. They see you as a whole person and your potential."

Would you recommend other young adults to volunteer at HCLF?

"If you want to be a part of a group that does meaningful work in the lives of teens from San Nicolas, and at the same time want to make significant impact in your own life, join the Heart-Centered Leadership Foundation as a volunteer."

Did Alyeska's experience motivate you to become a Heart-Centered Impact Coach? If you are between 18 and 29 years old, like to give back to the community and

are interested in further developing your personal and professional life, please contact HCLF at 5841211 (Whatsapp) or send an e-mail at hclfaruba@gmail.com.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Miniature

1 One of the map

Deadly 41 Pound

Sins part

5 Church 42 Calls for

fixture 43 Low digits

10 Pays to

play

12 "Cheers"

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23 More than

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25 Pack tight

28 Salon

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31 On this

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34 Swearing-

in vow

35 That guy's

36 Tote

37 Deluge



Yesterday's answer

DOWN

1 Survives

2 Like some

debts

3 Horse

house

4 Wallet bill

5 Needing

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6 Hurried

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8 Sci-fi

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9 Mountain

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11 Half-hour

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14 Twinge

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19 Start of

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20 Watchful

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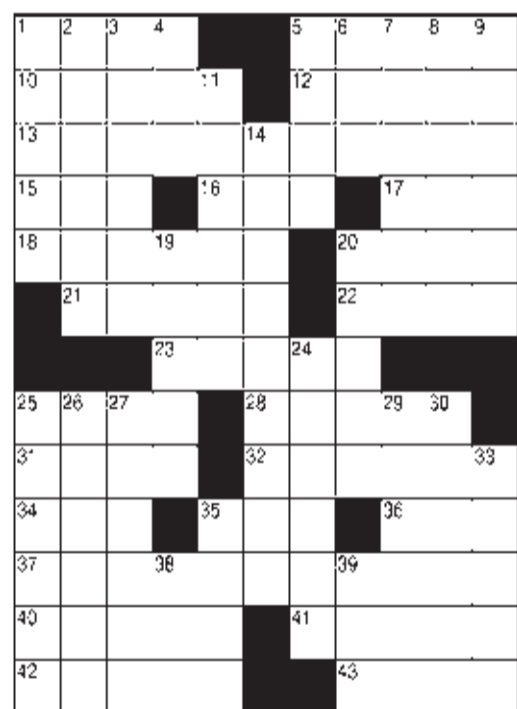
24 "Get a

move on!"

color

25 Contribute

39 Tire track



4-25

A X Y D I B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-25 CRYPTOQUOTE

B L N B N Q Y V S B N K S J R I N K

B N B N Y X L G B L G J Y V H S S

V L Y V K Y I S J G V Y E Q Y C V

B L N B N Q Y V S G J J Y Q Y T

— Y C N C O K N Z J

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I ASK YOU TO ENSURE THAT HUMANITY IS SERVED BY WEALTH AND NOT RULED BY IT — POPE FRANCIS



A worker, right, cleans an ATM as a customer uses another at a Chase branch in the Queens borough of New York on March 24, 2020.

Associated Press

Banks are paying savers again after many years of low rates

By KEN SWEET

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans are finally reaping some benefit from keeping their money in the bank. Banks are paying up for savers' deposits in a much bigger way than they have in more than a decade, based on recent earnings reports from the nation's biggest banks.

After a decade of low interest rates, the Federal Reserve has unleashed a rapid series of rate hikes to combat inflation, pushing up its benchmark rate to a range of 4.75% to 5%. That has prompted banks to pay higher interest on traditional savings products like money market funds, certificates of deposit and regular savings accounts.

A 24-month CD, a common savings product for medium-term savers, is now carrying an average yield of 4.81%, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. That's up from a 1.18% yield only a year ago. Further, non-bank names such as Apple are getting into the deposit game, giving savers even more options.

To bolster their deposits, banks are raising payouts to retain current customers and entice new ones. Some investors, leery of the current volatility in the stock and bond markets, could find a zero-risk investment like a savings account or CD an attractive option. The volatility was

only heightened after the failure of Silicon Valley Bank last month. A mass exodus of deposits in a short period of time doomed that bank, and led depositors at other midsize institutions to pull some of their money as well, although the withdrawals appear to have abated for now.

In a sign of how competitive it is getting for bank deposits, electronics giant Apple Inc. unveiled a savings account that will pay a 4.15% yield for Apple Card users. The savings account is in collaboration with Apple's consumer banking partner Goldman Sachs and actually pays out more than the 3.90% Goldman pays for deposits under its Marcus brand.

Bank of America, the second largest bank in the country, told investors last week that it was paying on average 1.38% to customers for their deposits, up from 0.96% a year earlier. That figure is still low for BofA because the bulk of customers' funds are in checking accounts, which typically pay the lowest yield. □

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Tucker Carlson, Fox News' most popular host, out at network

By **DAVID BAUDER**
AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fox News said Monday that it will no longer broadcast prime-time host Tucker Carlson, whose stew of grievances and political theories about Russia and the Jan. 6 insurrection had grown to define the network in recent years and influence GOP politics.

Fox said that the network and Carlson had "agreed to part ways" but it offered no explanation for the stunning move, saying that the last broadcast of "Tucker Carlson Tonight" aired last Friday.

The break comes less than a week after Fox agreed to pay \$787 million to settle a lawsuit with Dominion Voting Systems over the network's airing of false claims following the 2020 presidential election. Carlson was also recently named in a lawsuit by a former Fox producer who said the show had a cruel and misogynistic workplace. Meanwhile, CNN axed its own controversial anchor, Don Lemon, part of a one-day bloodletting in cable television news.



Tucker Carlson, host of "Tucker Carlson Tonight," poses for photos in a Fox News Channel studio on March 2, 2017, in New York.

Carlson, who worked at both CNN and MSNBC earlier in his career, ditched his bow-tie look and quickly became Fox's most popular personality after replacing Bill O'Reilly in the network's prime-time lineup in 2016. His populist tone about elites out to get average Americans rang true with Fox's predominantly conservative audience,

even leading to talk about him becoming a political candidate himself one day. He did not immediately return a message seeking comment on Monday. "Tucker Carlson had become even bigger than Fox News," said Brian Stelter, who's writing an upcoming second book about Fox, "Network of Lies." "His sudden ouster will have pro-

found consequences for Fox News, for TV news and the Republican Party." When Carlson's exit was announced during a live showing of the ABC daytime talk show "The View" on Monday, the studio audience applauded. Host Ana Navarro then led the crowd in a sing-along to a line from the song, "Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Good-

Associated Press

bye."

Earlier this year, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy gave Carlson exclusive access to security tapes from the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot, which the show used to conclude "the footage does not show an insurrection or riot in progress." His interpretation was denounced by many, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Carlson has also been outspoken in questioning the United States support of Ukraine following its invasion by Russian forces.

"It might be worth asking yourself since it is getting pretty serious: What is this really about?" Carlson said on his show. "Why do I hate Putin so much? Has Putin ever called me a racist? Has he threatened to get me fired for disagreeing with him? Has he shipped every middle-class job in my town to Russia?" Carlson had been expected to be among the first witnesses called if Dominion's case had gone to trial, but the two parties settled last Tuesday on the same day that opening statements were expected. □



From left, judges Craig Revel Horwood, Len Goodman and Bruno Tonioli gesture, during the final dress rehearsal for the opening of the 'Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour' at the NIA, Birmingham, England, Jan. 20, 2012.

Associated Press

By **JILL LAWLESS**
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Len Goodman, a long-serving judge on "Dancing with the Stars" and "Strictly Come Dancing" who helped revive interest in ballroom dancing on both sides of the Atlantic, has died, his agent said

Monday. He was 78.

Agent Jackie Gill said Goodman "passed away peacefully" on Saturday night. He had been diagnosed with bone cancer. A former professional ballroom dancer and British champion, Goodman was head judge on "Strictly

Dancing With the Stars' judge Len Goodman dies at 78

Come Dancing" for 12 years from its launch on the BBC in 2004. The dance competition, which pairs celebrities with professional dance partners, was a surprise hit and has become one of the network's most popular shows.

Goodman's pithy observations, delivered in a Cockney accent, endeared him to viewers. "You floated across that floor like butter on a crumpet," he remarked after one fox-trot. He praised a salsa-dancing couple as "like two sizzling sausages on a barbecue." Goodman was head judge on the U.S. version of the show, ABC's "Dancing With the Stars," for 15 years until his retire-

ment in November. For several years he judged the British and American shows simultaneously each autumn, criss-crossing the Atlantic weekly.

Buckingham Palace said Camilla, the queen consort, was "saddened to hear" of Goodman's death. The wife of King Charles III is a fan of "Strictly," and danced with Goodman at a 2019 event celebrating the British Dance Council. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said Goodman was "a great entertainer" who would be "missed by many."

British broadcaster Esther Rantzen said Goodman had been "astonished and delighted" by his late-life

fame. "One of the reasons he succeeded so well in the States is that he was quintessentially British," she said. "He was firm but fair, funny but a gentleman and I hope the nation will adopt his favorite expostulation of 'pickle me walnuts.'"

Goodman also presented BBC radio programs and made TV documentaries, including a 2012 program about the sinking of the Titanic. As a young man, Goodman had worked as a shipyard welder for the company that built the doomed ship.

BBC director-general Tim Davie said Goodman was "a wonderful, warm entertainer who was adored by millions." □

Kyle Busch helps RCR return to NASCAR's victory lane

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

TALLADEGA, Ala. (AP) —

There were many dark days season for Kyle Busch as his long, successful run with Joe Gibbs Racing came to an end.

JGR had lost its sponsor for the two-time Cup Series champion and the future NASCAR Hall of Famer was an expensive free agent. He offered to lower his market value and scoured the garage looking for a seat, facing the harsh reality that with all his talent he might not land with a top team.

It was Austin Dillon who asked his grandfather to consider speaking with Busch and somehow forget a 2011 incident in which Richard Childress attacked Busch following a Truck Series race. Childress famously removed his wristwatch before pummeling Busch as payback for wrecking a Richard Childress Racing entry a confrontation that earned Childress a \$150,000 fine from NASCAR. Dillon made a convincing argument and a pairing that once seemed unfathomable came to fruition as Busch left JGR and Toyota for a new job driving a Chevrolet for Childress.

Through 11 races, it is a partnership that is changing the Cup Series landscape.



Kyle Busch celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Talladega Superspeedway, Sunday, April 23, 2023, in Talladega, Ala.

Busch won his second race of the season on Sunday with a victory in double overtime at Talladega Superspeedway, where he milked every last drop of fuel in his tank to steal the win.

Crew chief Randall Burnett had called Busch in for a splash of gas during overtime, a decision that came too late for Busch to make it to pit road. Busch was secretly pleased: by not pitting, he gambled that he'd have a shot at the win rather than just a reason-

able finish.

"Rowdy" is on a mission this season to prove his value, reaffirm he is still an elite racer and thank RCR for giving him a job when his prospects seemed so grim. "They didn't think that Kyle Busch was washed up or anything like that," Busch said.

"It was really a breath of fresh air to get over there and get to work. Trust me, I've probably done more, worked harder in this year than I have in the last four -- just because of feeling like

it's my duty, it's my service to them to give them everything that I've got, absolutely everything that I've got, for them sticking their neck out for me at RCR."

It goes both ways. RCR had fallen on hard times over the last decade and the Cup Series had seemed to pass by the proud organization that won six championships with the late Dale Earnhardt. RCR won just five races after Kevin Harvick left following the 2013 season but showed some promise last

Associated Press

year with Tyler Reddick, who won three times.

Reddick decided he was leaving RCR at the end of the 2023 season to drive for Denny Hamlin and Michael Jordan. With an opportunity for Reddick to move a year early, Dillon pushed his grandfather to consider Busch. The first reward was Busch's win earlier this season at Fontana, which earned him an automatic berth in the playoffs. Then came the win at Talladega, where Childress has 13 career victories as an owner and raced 19 times himself from 1969 through 1981. His career best finish was sixth in 1980.

It was such a special breakthrough for Childress who last went to Talladega's victory lane in 2011 with Clint Bowyer that the 77-year-old entered the post-race news conference with an open bottle of champagne from Childress Vineyards.

"I think he's helping us build RCR back to where we want to be," Childress said of Busch, while making sure to credit his grandson for the hire.

"Racing is like life there's peaks and valleys. When you get in on a peak, it's harder to stay there. You got to be prepared when you're at the top. We've been there. □

AP source: Fox doubtful for Game 5 with broken finger

By JOSH DUBOW

AP Sports Writer

Sacramento star guard De'Aaron Fox broke the index finger on his shooting hand and is doubtful to play in Game 5 of the Kings' first-round series against the Golden State Warriors.

A person familiar with the injury said that Fox injured the finger on his left hand late in a Game 4 loss to the Warriors on Sunday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team didn't publicly release details.

Fox remained in the game

after the injury and even made a key 3-pointer in the closing minute before Sacramento lost 126-125. Fox passed out of a double team on the final possession and the Kings lost when Harrison Barnes missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer. The series is tied at two games apiece headed into Game 5 in Sacramento on Wednesday night.

Fox has emerged as a star in his first trip to the postseason, averaging 31.5 points, seven assists and six rebounds through six games. His 38 points in a Game 1

win were tied for the second most for a player in his postseason debut and his 126 points so far are tied for the sixth most for any player in his first four career playoff games.

Fox had 38 points, nine rebounds and five assists in the Game 4 loss.

Fox was announced last week as the inaugural winner of the NBA's clutch player of the year award. He led the league in clutch-game scoring this season with 194 points in 39 such games; clutch games are defined as those where



Sacramento Kings guard De'Aaron Fox (5) brings the ball upcourt against the Golden State Warriors during the first half of Game 4 in the first round of the NBA basketball playoffs in San Francisco, Sunday, April 23, 2023.

Associated Press

the margin between teams is five points or less at any point in the final five minutes.

That was the most clutch points scored in a season since LeBron James had 197 in the 2017-18 season. □

NFL draft back to being all about QBs at the top

By **ROB MAADDI**

AP Pro Football Writer

Quarterbacks are back on top in the NFL draft.

A year after the first 19 picks were non-QBs and Kenny Pickett was the only signal-caller selected in the first round, this draft class is loaded with potential franchise players.

Bryce Young and C.J. Stroud have been the center of attention since before last year's draft even took place. They could become the ninth pair of QBs selected 1-2 in the Super Bowl era.

Anthony Richardson and Will Levis should make it four QBs in the top 15, which has happened only five times previously. If they all go in the top 10, it'll be the second time ever.

Then there's Hendon Hooker, who may end up being a late first-round pick despite his age and knee injury.

There's no consensus at No. 1 this year like there was in 2021 when everyone knew Trevor Lawrence was going to Jacksonville but momentum has been building toward Young going first to Carolina. The 2021 Heisman Trophy winner at Alabama is an overwhelming favorite to go No. 1, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.



Alabama quarterback Bryce Young (9) throws the ball during the first half of the team's NCAA college football game against Mississippi State, Saturday, Oct. 22, 2022, in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Associated Press

The Panthers have been on the clock since they made a blockbuster trade with Chicago in March, leaping from No. 9 to have their choice of QBs.

"You go get the guy that you want," Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer said at the combine. "If you have conviction on a guy, you go get him. It's pretty simple that way. If you don't know and you're going to give all these resources to go up and get it, you're hurting your team

in the long run. You better be right. You better have conviction if you do move up. But when you do that, you're all-in." Young has all the tools. He excelled in a pro-style offense, can make the necessary throws, has strong pocket awareness and the ability to create off-schedule plays. The biggest concern surrounding Young is his size. He measured at 5-foot-9, 204 pounds at the combine.

No quarterback who weighed under 207 pounds

at the combine has been drafted in the first round. But Young is too talented to slip beyond the Panthers or Houston Texans at No. 2.

"If you just looked at it analytically, how many guys at that size have (become) superstars as undersized quarterbacks?" Panthers coach Frank Reich said. "And there are some, like Drew Brees ... and it all goes back to that recipe. How much are we going to weigh that? How important is that to us as an

organization? And that's the process that we go through. But, everything is a consideration. ... It's also a consideration (with) his playmaking ability, his accuracy, his leadership, his instincts. It's the same thing with C.J., Levis, Richardson, all of those guys. You look at every single one of those things, and it's a sliding scale on how you evaluate them."

Stroud was a finalist for the Heisman the past two seasons at Ohio State. He has the prototypical size at 6-foot-3, 214 pounds and is a precision passer who makes smart decisions. He didn't do too much outside the pocket but showed superior playmaking ability in a College Football Playoff semifinal loss to Georgia.

"The old scouting adage is if you can do it once, you can do it. So you know he does have that ability." NFL Network draft analyst Daniel Jeremiah said. "He is the purest thrower of the bunch. Just accurate. If you value decision-making, accuracy, as pretty much everybody does, C.J. Stroud is really, really solid in that."

Levis has the size, 6-foot-4, 229 pounds, that teams desire and experience playing in a pro-style offense at Kentucky. □

AP source: Jets agree on deal to acquire Aaron Rodgers



Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) looks to pass in the second half against the Detroit Lions during an NFL football game Nov. 6, 2022, in Detroit.

Associated Press

By **DENNIS WASZAK Jr.**

AP Pro Football Writer

After six weeks of waiting, Aaron Rodgers is leaving behind his brilliant legacy in Green Bay and heading to the bright lights and massive expectations of the Big Apple. The New York Jets have agreed on a deal to acquire the four-time NFL MVP from the Packers, according to a person with knowledge of the trade.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity on Monday because the teams have not officially announced the deal.

The 39-year-old Rodgers spent a few days in February contemplating his life and playing future during

an isolation retreat in Oregon while fans and media speculated about what he would decide. He emerged and deliberated some more before deciding on March 10 he intended to play again and for the Jets. And then he and the sports world waited and waited for the Packers and Jets to finally complete a deal.

"I've made it clear that my intention was to play and my intention was to play for the New York Jets," Rodgers said during an appearance on "The Pat McAfee Show" on YouTube and Sirius XM on March 15.

The Jets sent a contingent that included owner Woody Johnson, coach Robert Saleh and general

manager Joe Douglas to Rodgers' home in Southern California in early March. A few days later, Rodgers decided he wanted to continue his playing career by joining the Jets.

Several weeks of negotiations appeared to be stalled at times, with fans and the teams wondering when or if the trade would be completed.

"We're anxious," Johnson told reporters at the league's annual meetings on March 28.

"I guess, as we look forward, we're optimistic. But we have a plan, so we're willing to stick with our plan. And I don't think anybody is hyperventilating at this point." □